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- 19.—*Poems by* GEORGE P. MORRIS. With Illustrations by WEIR and DARLEY. Engraved by American Artists. Fourth Edition. New York: Charles Scribner. 1858. 8vo. pp. 365.

THE successful lyric poet has it in his power to be among the greatest benefactors of his own and coming ages. What men sing, strikes deeper into the soul than what they read. Blessings then be on the song-writer, who marries rhythm, rhyme, and melody to none but pure thought and generous feeling. This merit richly belongs to Mr. Morris. He has written odes and songs for a wide diversity of occasions, temperaments, and modes of feeling, from grave to gay, without ever pandering to a low taste, or giving voice to an unworthy sentiment. The popularity of his lyrics is the surest testimony to their poetic worth. No verse that is not at once sweet in sound, and imaginative in sense, — no verse that falls below a somewhat exclusive definition of true poetry, — can float smoothly and gracefully on a well-woven melody, or take strong hold on the hearts of a people. There are some of the songs in this collection that are heard through the land, and cannot but live for generations; for they touch the universal heart. Mr. Morris has an easy command of rhythm and metre. His verses are music to the ear, as well as poetry to the inward sense. They are not such verses as feebly suit existing melodies, but such as would of themselves inspire and reward the musical composer, and could not fail to prescribe and enforce at his hand, each its appropriate style of treatment. They commonly seize on the one central idea of the occasion or theme, give perfect unity to its expression, and group around it just those subsidiary thoughts that render it more emphatic. Though many of the pieces in this volume are not songs, there are hardly any of them that might not be sung. They are all short, yet without being fragmentary. They are miscellaneous and unconnected, except that the last sixty pages are occupied by “The Maid of Saxony,” a brilliant and successful opera, in which the songs are bound together by a thread of spirited dialogue in prose. The volume contains not a few pieces that are familiar to every ear, such as “Woodman, spare that tree,” and “Near the lake where drooped the willow.” Among those that are new to us, though perhaps well known to many of our readers, we quote the following, inscribed “The Evergreen.”

“ Love cannot be the aloë-tree,
Whose bloom but once is seen ;
Go search the grove — the tree of love
Is sure the evergreen :

For that 's the same, in leaf or frame,
 'Neath cold or sunny skies ;
 You take the ground its roots have bound,
 Or it, transplanted, dies !

“ That love thus shoots, and firmly roots
 In woman's heart, we see ;
 Through smiles and tears in after-years
 It grows a fadeless tree.
 The tree of love, all trees above,
 For ever may be seen,
 In summer's bloom or winter's gloom,
 A hardy evergreen.” — p. 136.

It seems to us that there is as much of true poetry as of pious sentiment in these “Lines on the Burial of Mrs. Mary L. Ward.”

“ The knell was tolled — the requiem sung,
 The solemn burial-service read ;
 And tributes from the heart and tongue
 Were rendered to the dead.

“ The dead ? — Religion answers, ‘ No !
 She is not dead — she cannot die !
 A Christian left this vale of woe ! —
 An angel lives on high !’

“ The earth upon her coffin-lid
 Sounded a hollow, harsh adieu !
 The mound arose, and she was hid
 For ever from the view !

“ For ever ? — Drearily the thought
 Passed, like an ice-bolt, through the brain ;
 When Faith the recollection brought
 That we shall meet again.

“ The mourners wound their silent way
 Adown the mountain's gentle slope,
 Which, basking in the smile of May,
 Looked cheerfully as hope.

“ As hope ? — What hope ? — That boundless One
 God in His love and mercy gave ;
 Which brightens, with salvation's sun,
 The darkness of the grave.” — pp. 219, 220.